

BY JOHN KENDRICK BANGS

"LOOK AFTER THEIR MAKE-UP,
AND REHEARSE THEM."

the Beggar's Confession.

"Then next to the make-up comes the story," continued my host, as James, the butler, entered with the Remsen and I went to the dining room to be treated with the artistic touch in the old days when I was working alone used to prepare my own stories and with no end of care. My best ideas I got from the papers, and many of the best pessimistic literature of the day. Every other night I would go to the Astor or some other available library and come away at Balzac, Eugene Sue, Victor Hugo or some other, getting material which I would later use in my own stories of my sufferings, until I became known in one town as the Dickens of the baggars. People took me up and carried me about for the whole winter, and I made a lot of money as a beggar parties that people gave, but that, of course, didn't last.

"Fads by constant fading soon cease to be profitable," my host's opinion dropped out of that business at the end of that first season; but it gave me a real start. I made money enough at it to be able to employ two assistants, by whose aid I was enabled to produce a large number, which has resulted in this very evident

BITING MY NICKEL TO SEE IF IT WAS GOOD.

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"Should you, indeed? Well let me tell you," he said, "in confidence, I do. Do you ever read," here he leaned over and whispered the name of a prominent and popular newspaper in the city near by?"

"Yes," I cried, astounded.

"The very same," said he gleefully: "It's mine. I own it, though nobody but you knows it, and every story in it has been written by me, and I have been in every State in the Union beforehand."

"By Jingo!" I ejaculated. "That accounts for the awful, depressing quality of the stories in the paper."

"That's right," said my host. "That accounts for it, and it accounts also for the \$250,000 worth of my annual income. I tell you what it is, my friend, the artistic possibilities of the profession are bagged and bagged tight."

"I beg your pardon?" I asked.

"I mean I dread to think of where I should be today had I not perceived this at the

Lair on, after another Remsen coughed and a pleasant chat on other things I rose to depart.

"Remember my friend," said my host as he walked to the door and assisted me into his Mercedes motor car, which stood at the door, "this is all in confidence."

"Certainly," said I.

"Thank you," said he. "I trust you and good-bye. Henry," he added, addressing the chauffeur, "take this gentleman wherever he wishes to go. . . by the by" as the chauffeur turned to leave, "your friend is dropping to his knees, you couldn't spare a poor devil a nickel to buy a loaf of bread with, could you?"

There was so much pleading in his tone that I could not resist.

"Certainly," said I, "I will be dropping the nickel into his outstretched hand, and then turning to the chauffeur I added, "To the Heilmatt club."

The automobile began to chug, and in a moment we sped along the highway leaving my millionaire benefactor standing in front of his mansion biting my nickel to see if it was food.

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